

MODERATING RESISTANCES

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies

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Abstract

This study seeks to historically elaborate on the roots of moderate Islam, focusing on the productive practices towards religious spaces in the Dutch colonial periods in the East Indies. It analyses the strategic changes in the Dutch reproduction of religious space during the Aceh War and the Sarekat Islam periods. The author argues that the Dutch government frequently seized Muslim religious space to secure its colonial power. The colonial government reproduced Muslim religious space in these two eras, representing symbolic support for the Dutch colonial hegemony. The appropriation of religious space was a spatial strategy to perpetuate the hegemony in social space. This study concludes that the reproduction of Muslim space represented a moderate position towards the Dutch colonial hegemony. Meanwhile, counter-space emerged to reverse such moderating practices. By counter-space, the Dutch moderating efforts on socio-religious space were contested, opposed, and condemned.

[Kajian ini berupaya menguraikan secara historis akar Islam moderat, dengan fokus pada praktik produksi ruang keagamaan pada masa penjajahan Belanda di Indonesia. Analisis difokuskan pada perubahan strategi pemerintah kolonial Belanda dalam melakukan reproduksi ruang keagamaan selama periode Perang Aceh dan Sarekat Islam. Pemerintah Belanda sering merebut ruang keagamaan umat Islam untuk mengamankan kekuasaannya. Pemerintah kolonial mereproduksi ruang keagamaan umat Islam pada dua era tersebut sebagai merupakan simbol dukungan terhadap hegemoni kolonial Belanda. Perampasan ruang keagamaan merupakan

strategi spasial untuk melanggengkan hegemoni atas ruang sosial. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahwa reproduksi ruang keagamaan Islam merepresentasikan posisi moderat terhadap hegemoni kolonial. Sementara itu, ruang perlawanan muncul untuk membalikkan praktik-praktik moderasi tersebut. Melalui ruang perlawanan ini, upaya-upaya moderasi pemerintah kolonial Belanda dalam bidang sosial-keagamaan ditentang, ditantang, dan dikecam.]

Keywords: Moderate Islam, Radical Islam, Religious Space, the Dutch colonial hegemony.

A. Introduction

As part of social space, religious space is often reproduced to perpetuate the hegemony of politically dominant groups. A triumph in reproducing socio-religious space could mean the capability of controlling and disciplining religious communities. In this regard, space production becomes inseparable from dominant structures' interests. The dominant structure is the one that frequently seeks to reproduce space to perpetuate its hegemony. The efforts to unveil the reproduction of space are crucial to deciphering how the dominant structure endures within specific periods.

This paper elaborates on the production of space during Dutch colonial rule in the East Indies, concentrating on the production of Muslim space during the Aceh War (1873–1942) and the *Sarekat Islam* (1911–1926). The two cases indicated the dynamics of representation of how the Dutch government produced its colonial hegemony through the reproduction of the moderating space of Islam. Based on the analysis of the two, this study concludes that the Dutch colonial government managed to reproduce a moderate Muslim space for compromising support for the Dutch colonial hegemony. The appropriation of Muslim space is a spatial strategy to moderate the radical oppositions of Muslims so as to secure Dutch colonial hegemony.

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In general, many scholars have concluded that moderation, tolerance, and religious freedom—qualities that are important for bolstering democracy in Indonesia—should be widely promoted as they are essentially good. They have, however, critically analysed these attributes and focused on the problems related to the acceptance, advancement, and application of the diverse (unique) and political aspects of Indonesian moderate Islam. In this regard, scholars' attention mostly focuses on *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU), since it is frequently cited as the biggest Islamic organisation in the Muslim world with moderate viewpoints.¹ Understanding NU moderation requires a (normative) religious framework and, to some extent, depoliticises it. Although the term “moderation” is more politically understood due to its strong association with the “war on terror”, for NU, it is tied to its *aswaja* theology.

NU's moderation is distinct from that of the West, which is closely associated with liberalism.² However, it is the fact that a large portion of NU's followers lack tolerance and moderation and that their beliefs diverge from those of the moderate rhetoric voiced frequently by NU elites. The NU's elites use slogans based on moderation (tolerance, pluralism, *Islam Nusantara*) as political rhetoric for pragmatic political interests, such as bolstering Jokowi's support among voters and halting the expansion of “rival” Islamist organisations that also happen to back Jokowi's rival in the 2019 elections.³ NU's *Islam Nusantara* concept is a reactionary response against the rise of extremism, and it has also evolved into a useful political tool for Jokowi to preserve national

¹ NU is the biggest Muslim organization in Indonesia which was founded since 1926. During the Dutch colonial era, NU also declared “the Netherlands as the *Dar-al Islam*” in 1938 and, until 1942, “NU's stance towards the Dutch was one of extreme accommodationism”. Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), p. 40.

² Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

³ Marcus Mietzner and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, “The Myth of Pluralism: Nahdlatul Ulama and the Politics of Religious Tolerance in Indonesia”, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 42, no. 1 (2020), pp. 58–84.

stability—that is, to protect his administration from the threat of instability brought on by Islamic religious fanaticism. The government does, in fact, promote *Islam Nusantara* under Jokowi's leadership. The government provides support because it is considered in line with the government's agenda. However, Kato warns that the government's support has led to antagonism because it seems to be the only version of *Islam Nusantara* that is considered legitimate, so it tends to blame others.⁴

In this article, I will conduct a further historical analysis of the roots of moderation during Dutch colonialism. In the Dutch colonial periods, moderation was seen negatively, as it implied a compromising attitude towards colonialism. I will demonstrate a moment and the context in which it was contested and refuted, particularly by anti-colonial activists. Tolerating the subjugation brought about by Dutch colonisation is the definition of moderation. Moreover, giving Muslims the freedom to worship was just a strategy to persuade Muslims away from resisting colonialism. Therefore, the Dutch highly accepted and appreciated moderate Muslims. The Dutch reproduced Islamic moderation in social space to maintain its hegemony so that it became friendly (*ramah*) for the perpetuation of colonialism. The moderate Muslims became an apparatus for the colonial hegemony of the Dutch, and, therefore, they were in intensive opposition with anti-colonial radicals from Muslim groups.

Further analysis of Indonesian moderate Islam in modern-day Indonesia can greatly benefit from elaborating on the historical development of spatial production for moderating resisting tendencies throughout the Dutch colonial periods. The colonial system has endured throughout history, so its influence will never disappear entirely, even if it is gone or concealed.⁵ In spatial logic, the preconditions of social space have unique ways of enduring and remaining within that space, underscoring the continuity of previous developments in space.⁶

For the above purpose, the paper will briefly describe first the relevance and development of spatial analysis in religious studies.

⁴ Hisanori Kato, "The Islam Nusantara Movement in Indonesia", in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, ed. by Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Brill, 2021), pp. 110–28.

⁵ J.J. Klaveren, *The Dutch Colonial System in the East Indies* (1983), p. 7.

⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2011), p. 229.

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Secondly, it will elaborate on how the socio-religious space was dominated, appropriated, and reproduced by the dominant structure of Dutch colonialism and was confronted by radicalised Muslim groups. The last part will end with concluding remarks to note the production of religious space in contemporary Indonesian Muslims.

B. The Production of Space: A Spatial Turn in Studying Religion

“Religion takes place in space” signifies that religious groups occupy certain social spaces such as mosques, churches, temples, and other spaces denoted as sacred. Religious and cosmological beliefs have spatial characteristics. Therefore, religion and space are inseparable because changes that occur in religion will affect their spatial arrangements.⁷ Thus, religious space serves as a social space where people represent and embody their holy orientations, meanings, and symbols within profane worlds.

Since the 1980s, social theorists such as Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, and, eventually, Henri Lefebvre have initiated a serious interest in space. In the 19th Century, spatial analysis radically developed in the hands of, for example, David Harvey and Edward Soja, so that space became a methodological approach that spread in Europe, Asia, and the US. Religious studies are no exception to this development. Spatial analysis also drew attention to theologians, starting in the 2000s.⁸

For the study of religion, this methodology is a novel approach and a timely one in so far as it is possible for scholars to engage with important themes within contemporary social and cultural theory.⁹

Since then, the interplay of religion and space has attracted the attention of a number of scholars.¹⁰ They have examined the relation-

⁷ Kim Knott, “Geography, Space and the Sacred”, in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, 2nd ed edition, ed. by Hinnells (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 476.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Kim Knott, “Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion”, *Temenos - Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2005), p. 177.

¹⁰ For example, see Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, 1987); John Corrigan, “Spatiality and Religion”, in *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. by Barney Warf and Santa Arias (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009); Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Al-Jāmi‘ah*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2023 M/1445 H

ship between religion and space with various approaches, ranging from hermeneutical, socio-historical, and spatial-critical perspectives.¹¹ For example, Knott develops a spatial theory examining the relationship between religious space and secular realities,¹² incorporating Lefebvre's production of space theory. He does not, however, delve into the Marxist undertones of Lefebvre's theory.

Henri Lefebvre's 1974 work, "*La Production de l'espace*," introduces a new unit of analysis for analysing capitalism's mode of production. He analyses it through the political-social space, advancing beyond Marxism and the classical critique of political economy. This shift in the analysis unit makes criticism of capitalist modes of production more pervasive, making Lefebvre's theory of space a general theory of production.¹³

Lefebvre argues that space is not an empty area but a social product, challenging Cartesian logic's absolute notion of space as an empty place. He also criticises Kant's concept of space as separate from empirical reality, making it difficult to explain the transition from mental to practical space.¹⁴ Lefebvre challenges the traditional understanding of space, arguing that it encompasses mental, physical, and all other forms of space.¹⁵ He argues that space production occurs and is contested socially, with the bourgeois group actively producing "abstract space" to maintain their dominance. Abstract space, he argues, is a tool of domination, as it conceals historical conditions and internal contradictions. When the history and contradictions behind abstract space are revealed, counter space emerges to resist its dominance, or vice versa. Abstract space will become absolute space, which is political and religious in nature, so that it is oppressive and dogmatic in character, in order to protect its dominance in social space from the threat of Ritual (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992); David Chidester and Edward Tabor Linenthal (eds.), *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Knott, "Geography, Space and the Sacred".

¹¹ Jeanne Halgren Kilde, "Approaching Religious Space: An Overview of Theories, Methods, and Challenges in Religious Studies", *Religion and Theology*, vol. 20, nos. 3–4 (Brill, 2014), pp. 183–201.

¹² There are five elements of Knott's spatial theory and method: (1) the body as the source of space; (2) the dimensions of space; (3) the properties of space; (4) the aspects of space; and (5) the dynamics of space; Knott, "Spatial Theory and Method".

¹³ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. xxi, 100.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies counter space.¹⁶

Space is not just a passive locus for social relations in capitalist hegemony. Space has an active (operational or instrumental) role similar to knowledge and action in the existing mode of production.¹⁷ Space is a social reality produced by communities, encompassing thought (the conceived), feeling (the perceived), and experience (the lived). It is relational and fundamental, requiring understanding in specific contexts.¹⁸ Lefebvre defines space as a social product, originating from and produced by social relationships between objects and products.¹⁹ Analysis of spatial production should consider social constellations, power relations, and conflicts in every social space.²⁰ Schmid (2008) summarised that, in general, there are three moments of production that must be revealed in dismantling the dialectical interplay of (social) space, which include (1) the material production, (2) the production of knowledge, and (3) the production of meaning.²¹

The body plays a crucial role in social space, acting as an intermediary between mental and social spaces.²² It perceives, lives, and produces space through the body and is the source of space.²³ Living bodies are space itself, producing and generating other bodies.²⁴ The body is often transformed into symbols, which are intrinsic parts of a politico-religious whole.²⁵ For this reason, certain influential (spatial) bodies—like religious figures—are frequently appropriated in the production of space as figurative means to exert dominance over social space. Lefebvre emphasises the importance of not overlooking the body and extending it into surrounding networks of relationships and pathways to decipher the production of space.²⁶

Lefebvre's concept of social space production involves triadic dimensions called moments of the production of space or "spatial triad." These dimensions are dialectically connected and used as

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁸ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 221, 288, 298.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 162, 365.

²¹ Schmid, "Space, Difference, Everyday Life", p. 41.

²² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 61.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 211.

approximations to understand uncertainty in space. Schmid (2008) equates Lefebvre's analytical structures to linguistic analysis, consisting of (1) spatial practices, (2) representation of space, and (3) representational space.²⁷ *First*, spatial practice refers to the materialist dimension of social activities, forming a network of interaction and communication from everyday life, analogous to the syntagmatic dimension of language. *Second*, the representation of space, encompassing verbal forms, descriptions, and scientific theories, maps, plans, pictures, and signs, is the dominant space in language production, equating to the paradigmatic dimension of language. *Third*, representational spaces are symbolic dimensions of space that connect to materialist symbols, often referring to divine powers, logos, states, or principles. These spaces are dominated by images or symbols, overlaying physical space and making symbolic use of its objects. They tend towards coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs.²⁸

The political-social space is understood through the dialectic interplay of three dimensions, focusing on the creation of space, meaning, and organisation. Words and phrases manifest in unrecognised code, which can be decoded and read through thoughts and word-based reflection. Lefebvre argues that there may be “specific codes, established at specific historical periods and varying in their effects.”²⁹

Those who are able to produce space are those who are able to dominate and appropriate space so that it transforms into an absolute space. Meanwhile, others are only able to reproduce that absolute space.³⁰ It is the bourgeoisie who always has initiative in the struggle for and in space because the users of space are passive.³¹ “The producers of space have always acted in accordance with a representation, while the ‘users’ passively experienced whatever was imposed upon them inasmuch as it was more or less thoroughly inserted into, or justified by their representational space”.³²

Lefebvre asserts that “each mode of production has its own

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 39; Christian Schmid, “Henri Lefebvre’s Theory of the Production of Space: Towards a Three-Dimensional Dialectic”, in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. by Kanishka Goonewardena (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 38.

²⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 16-7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4.

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies particular space, a shift from one mode to another must entail the production of a new space".³³ Each of these spaces has its own code for the production of discourse and a reality adequate to the code, which then has a history and becomes knowledge and power.³⁴ Therefore, an opposition to the dominant bourgeois space must be similarly carried out by the reproduction of counter space. As long as counter space is not produced, 'differential' space is impossible. As a matter of fact, 'differential' space has often been destroyed before it is produced.³⁵

Overall, this study aims to analyse the historical representation of Dutch colonial hegemony over Muslim religious spaces in the Dutch East Indies, focusing on the origins, interconnections, distortions, contradictions, and interactions of these spaces with the society or mode of production under consideration,³⁶ particularly in the context of the Aceh War and Sarekat Islam.

C. The Contested Reproduction of Muslim Space in the Dutch East Indies

1. *The Dutch Reproduction of Mosque in the Aceh War*

The Aceh War, spanning 1873-1942, marked a significant period in Dutch colonial East Indies.³⁷ The Dutch recognised the significant role of religion in Acehnese resistance,³⁸ attempting to modify their religious strategy to appropriate religious spaces, despite not always succeeding.³⁹ Nevertheless, it may offer us an illustration of how the appropriation of religious spaces was carried out to perpetuate the dominance of Dutch colonialism in the East Indies.

Religious space was not the only factor consolidating the anti-Dutch resistance in Aceh, but it should not be simply ignored. The framing of the war against the Dutch as a holy war did have a great effect on radicalising the Acehnese resistance because its propaganda

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-6.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁷ Paul van Veer, *Perang Aceh: Kisah Kegagalan Snouck Hurgronje* (Jakarta: Grafiti, 1985).

³⁸ Christian Snouck Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, vol. I (Leiden: E.J.Brill).

³⁹ Harry Jindrich Benda, *Bulan Sabit dan Matahari Terbit: Islam Indonesia pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang* (Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1980).

was channelled through the religious spaces of Muslims.⁴⁰ Thus, despite seeking to create counter-framing strategies,⁴¹ the Dutch appropriated and reproduced the religious spaces of the Acehnese Muslims. For example, during the Aceh War, the Kutaraja grand mosque of Aceh was occupied, burnt, and renovated to support the Dutch colonial dominance.

The Dutch colonial government learned valuable lessons about the important role of Islam in fostering a religiously based resistance movement from the Aceh War.⁴² During the war in Aceh, religious space played a productive role in waging resistance against the spatial expansion of Dutch colonialism. Therefore, the Dutch attempted to appropriate these religious spaces and reproduce them with new symbolic representations to moderate the anti-Dutch resistances and simultaneously strengthen the spatial dominance of Dutch colonialism.

In 1873, Dutch troops, consisting of 168 officers and 3200 soldiers, led by J.H.R. Kohler, aimed to master the grand mosque of Aceh as an interim target during their first expedition. The Kutaraja grand mosque was used as a temporary base to expand Dutch control over the palace of Aceh. Kutaraja literally means the king's castle and later became a name for the surrounding area of the Aceh Sultanate palace. The Dutch had difficulties in the conquest of the palace because of its location, which was not close to the sea, so they needed extra time and effort in transporting their troops and artillery.⁴³ On 12 April 1873, on their way to attack the palace, they saw "a grey wall, on top of which a brownish roof protruded to a tall, dense tree. This building, as he said, and whatever was confirmed by Chinese guide Khoé T'jian

⁴⁰ Ibrahim Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah: Perang Aceh, 1873-1912* (1987); Imran Teuku Abdullah, *Hikayat Prang Sabi: Satu Bentuk Karya Sastra Perlawanan* (Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2008).

⁴¹ Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah*, p. 26; Henri Carel Zentgraaff, *Aceh*, trans. by Aboebakar Atjeh (Jakarta: Beuna, 1983), pp. 395–6; Andi M. Faisal Bakti, "Islam and Nation Formation in Indonesia", Master Thesis (Canada: McGill University, 1993), p. 34; P.S.V. Koningsveld, "Conversion of European Intellectuals to Islam: The Case of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje Alias 'Abd al-Ghaffār", in *Muslims in Interwar Europe: a Transcultural Historical Perspective*, ed. by Bekim Agai, Umar Ryad, and Mehdi Sajid (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2016), p. 99.

⁴² Ruth Thomas McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism* (Jakarta: Equinox Pub, 2006), p. 10.

⁴³ S.C.H. Nederburgh, *Proeve van een onderzoek der middelen tot oplossing van het Atjeh-vraagstuk* (Mart. Nijhoff, 1886), p. 8.

Gie, is the grand mosque of Aceh”.⁴⁴ The Dutch occupation targeted the palace, but they had to pass the grand mosque before reaching the palace, and the Acehnese made it a stronghold to confront the invasion of the Dutch troops.⁴⁵ At the time, the grand mosque became a representational space for the Acehnese resistance against Dutch colonial expansion.

Actually, the Dutch troops were finally able to take control of the mosque for a while on 10 April 1873, but because “*Missigit* [mosque] could no longer be maintained and the troops could not stay in it,” the Dutch troops were ordered to return to their temporary camp on the coast.⁴⁶ On 14 April 1873, the Dutch tried again to “go up against and conquer the *Missigit*.”⁴⁷ The Dutch troops, in this second experiment, prepared and carried a ladder, which was made the day before from the areca nut trunk, so that it was still wet, which made many Dutch troops slip when climbing with armour, as high as 5 metres to climb the *Missigit* wall.⁴⁸ In this second attempt, the Dutch troops succeeded in once again conquering the *Missigit*, and they “cheered loudly and repeatedly announced to the people of Aceh that the unbelievers had taken their shrine for the second time.”⁴⁹ The grand mosque—which represents the Acehnese resistance—was taken over and changed to symbolise the Dutch victory, although it was temporary.

To retake the *Missigit*, the Acehnese never gave up and came again with a greater number.⁵⁰ However, the Dutch managed to maintain control of the *Missigit*.⁵¹ Things turned around immediately when General Kohler was about to congratulate Major Cavalje under the banyan tree, south of *Missigit*, but was suddenly shot by an Acehnese fighter hiding “in the moat on the other side of the river, perhaps at a distance of ± 350 metres” in the upper left arm that pierced the heart and his lungs until he was finally killed.⁵² Not only to congratulate,

⁴⁴ J.F.D. Bruinsma, *De verovering van Atjeh's Grootte Missigit* (Pyttersen Tz, 1889), p. 17.

⁴⁵ J.W.F. Herfkens, *De expeditiën naar Atjeh, 1873-1874* (Koninklijke Militaire Academie, 1900), p. 15.

⁴⁶ Bruinsma, *De verovering van Atjeh's Grootte Missigit*, p. 45.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 68–9.

Kohler actually intended to warn Cavalje that the place he stood on was very open (dangerous).⁵³ General Kohler's death did not immediately make the Dutch surrender. They continued the battle until its peak, a very fierce one on 16 April 1873, and their defeat made them retreat for the second time on 17 April of the same year.⁵⁴

The grand mosque as a representational space was contested by the Dutch to represent their dominance. Yet, it is worth noting that, in Aceh, where the majority of the population was Muslim, the Dutch's control over a grand mosque was a humiliation, so it made the Acehnese more aggressive in order to seize their mosque back. A mosque is a sacred space where Muslims worship their God. In the Muslim community, it is a common social practice. Therefore, the picking out of the mosque as an interim army barrack and a symbolic space for the (temporary) victory of the Dutch seemed to be a fatal mistake that actually made the Acehnese Muslims more radical, so the first Dutch expedition ended in defeat. The success of the Acehnese in confronting the first Dutch aggression became a theme discussed in Javanese mosques so that it was able to give new hope.⁵⁵ Not only that, it also fueled the growing anti-colonial resurgence throughout the Muslim world's atmosphere.⁵⁶

In 1874, the Dutch second expedition, led by Van Swieten, successfully conquered the grand mosque and palace of the Aceh Sultanate. Unlike the first failed expedition, the Dutch landed on the east, rather than the west, of the Aceh River (*Krueng Aceh*) to reduce the difficulties of artillery and infantry transportation.⁵⁷ Despite the large number of infantry, the Dutch mobilised large artillery equipment to conquer the grand mosque easily for the third time. The Dutch learned from the defeat of their first expedition in 1873.⁵⁸ The success of conquering the mosque on 24 January 1874 was considered the "most beautiful victory" offered to the Dutch king and motherland.⁵⁹ Later on, this defeat compelled the Acehnese fighters to find a new space to counter Dutch rule.

After all, the Acehnese palace's conquest was insignificant as it

⁵³ *Gevonden in Delpher - De grondwet*, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Bruinsma, *De verovering van Atjeh's Grootte Missigit*, pp. 73, 76.

⁵⁵ Van Veer, *Perang Aceh*, p. 89.

⁵⁶ Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: the Umma below the Winds* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 43.

⁵⁷ *Gevonden in Delpher - Tubantia*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Bruinsma, *De verovering van Atjeh's Grootte Missigit*, p. 88.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

no longer represented the centre of Acehnesse power. It is worth noting that after the rule of Iskandar Muda (1607–1636), the Aceh sultanate declined, and its power was concentrated merely in the surrounding area of the palace (Kutaraja).⁶⁰ Aceh's power was no longer concentrated in the sultanate due to the fact that it was divided into the control of local authorities that autonomously ruled their own local territory. Despite the Sultan, there were three other influential local rulers of Aceh. They were (a) *Panglima Sagi* (commander-in-chief), who headed semi-independent surrounding regions of Kutaraja, which was divided into three *sagis* (XXI, XXV, and XXVI); (b) the *Uleebalang*, who headed a confederation of territories (*mukims*/parishes); and (c) *Ulama* (clerics), who had strong cultural-religious powers over the Acehnesse Muslims.⁶¹

In other words, the symbolic meaning of the palace had faded in the everyday eyes of the Acehnesse at that time. As a result, the Dutch easily took over the Kutaraja palace. The Dutch once recognised control over the Sultan of Aceh as a strategy for regulating Acehnesse. “There is one way to calm *Aceb Besar* in a way that is satisfying to us, or rather to get rid of it, to recognise the Sultan.”⁶² Yet, it did not work because the Aceh Palace no longer represented a unifying symbolic power like in the previous Aceh Sultanate era. Its power had been divided and distributed at the local level. Such fragmentation of power had an influence on the spatial practices of the Acehnesse. Such dynamics were later realised by the Dutch, as confirmed by Snouck Hurgronje, that to conquer Aceh was not enough to confiscate the royal Sultan alone; it was required to subdue all local chiefs of Aceh “to form a settlement there of safety and advantage, a force sufficient to subdue all the chiefs would be necessary.”⁶³

In contrast to Islamic symbolism, which affected the majority of Acehnesse Muslims, the Aceh palace lost its cohesive power. Stated differently, “The Sultan's authority over his people was equal to zero.”⁶⁴ The awareness of the significance of Islamic symbolism led the Dutch to further reproduce the Acehnesse religious space, e.g., the grand mosque, by appropriating it with certain colonial representations. The

⁶⁰ Ismail Jakub, *Tengku Tjibik Di Tiro: Hidup dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1960), p. 21.

⁶¹ Amirul Hadi, *Islam and State in Sumatra: a Study of Seventeenth-Century Aceh* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), p. 41.

⁶² Nederburgh, *Proeve van een onderzoek*, p. 31.

⁶³ Hurgronje, *The Acehnesse*, vol. I, p. viii.

⁶⁴ W.A. Terwoot, *Het land van Jan Pieterszoon Coen* (Geerts, 1892), p. 631.

historical-spatial code could be decoded from the contradictory Dutch spatial practices that, if on the first expedition, the grand mosque of Kutaraja was burned down, after the second expedition, the Dutch renovated it. The objective of such spatial practice was to convince the Acehese Muslims that the Dutch were acting with genuine motives.

After successfully mastering the palace and appointing the 14-years-old Sultan (namely, Muhammad Daud as the successor of Sultan Alaidin Mahmud Shah, who died of illness) in January 1874, the Dutch managed to appropriate the grand mosque by rebuilding it in the days of Governor Van Der Heyden. The person who promised to rebuild the grand mosque was General Van Swieten, and this was repeated by Governor General van Lansberge when he visited Aceh in 1877 as proof that the Acehese religion was fully tolerated and respected so that there was no more hostility from the Acehese. Van Swieten stated, “that the great *missigit* would be rebuilt and made a place of true mercy, from which there will be no more death and destruction, but prayers to Almighty God and works of love will emerge.”⁶⁵ The building of the mosque was considered by the Dutch as “tangible and lasting evidence” to the Acehese.⁶⁶

The groundbreaking of the mosque was on 9 October 1879, and the handover of keys was on 26 December 1882.⁶⁷ Lieutenant General van der Heyden, the Governor of Aceh, laid down the first stone as a marker for the reconstruction. During the key handover ceremony, Pruys van Der Hoeven emphasised in his speech that from the beginning, the Dutch East Indies government wanted peace so that “order” and “prosperity” would emerge in Aceh. Under the supervision of the Dutch East Indies government, the people of Aceh would be given the freedom to manage themselves without any interference in running their businesses, trade, or religion. “Remember that the Netherlands is not your enemy, but wants nothing more than to promote your prosperity and, again, prosperity” and “The Dutch do their best and keep what they promise,” hoping that the Acehese would also keep their promise to bury the hatchet.⁶⁸ However, such Dutch recognition

⁶⁵ J. Kreemer, *Atjeh* (EJBrill, 1922), p. 385.

⁶⁶ *De ingenieur; Weekblad gewijd aan de techniek en de economie van openbare werken en nijverheid* jrg 28, 1913, no 28, 12-07-1913, no. 28 (1913).

⁶⁷ “De Vrede in Atjeh. Particuliere Correspondentie van het Bat. Hbld. Kotta Radja, den 12 Januari 1882.”, *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, Dag edition (Batavia, 23 Jan 1882), p. 3.

⁶⁸ A. Pruys van der Hoeven, *Mijne ervaring van Atjeh* (Belinfante, 1886), p. 67.

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies of the sovereignty of the Kutaraja palace and mosque was deceitful because they remained governed or controlled under the administration of Dutch authority and leadership.⁶⁹

The renovated mosque was reproduced to serve as an abstract space for Dutch colonialism, aiming to eliminate the *spatio*-historical traces of previous Dutch spatial practices in the Acehese Muslim social space. Actually, the renovated mosque was described as “a truly beautiful and impressive building, which is an honour for the main designers and builders” and “the visitors, and this is many, are very happy.”⁷⁰ The Dutch government fully bore the building costs of the mosque.⁷¹ To rebuild the mosque, a contractor from China named Lie A Sie was invited, and construction materials were imported from abroad as “lime was supplied from Pinang, a brick pair from the Netherlands; marble for floors and stairs were called in from China; cast iron windows from Belgium; heavy iron poles from Surabaya” and so on. The mosque was rebuilt in “Byzantine style in the form of a rectangle, an equilateral Greek cross, made entirely of European bricks and teak.”⁷² In other words, the grand mosque was built in the style of a European building and stood out in downtown Kutaraja.⁷³ Yet, such European tendencies in rebuilding the grand mosque became a contradiction which provided momentum for the Acehese to later confront the Dutch’s purposes, and it was proven that “*Missigit* is not counted by the Acehese. If it were built by indigenous people, either Acehese or Malays from other places, in consultation with the *imam*, it would be different”⁷⁴ and, as a result, “tons of gold spent on the construction of the *missigit* was considered to have been thrown away.”⁷⁵

The materials imported from primarily Western countries and the design of the mosque reflecting European styles, without any consultation or involvement of the Acehese, demonstrated the dominating tendencies of the Dutch. The practices of mosque construction contradicted the verbal statements of the Dutch elite’s speeches. It

⁶⁹ Brutus, *Atjehsche Omtrekken* (s’Gravenhage: W. Cremer, 1887), p. 99.

⁷⁰ “De Vrede in Atjeh”, p. 3.

⁷¹ Pruys van der Hoeven, *Mijne ervaring van Atjeh*, p. 67.

⁷² Kreemer, *Atjeh*, p. 386.

⁷³ *De ingenieur; Weekblad gewijd aan de techniek en de economie van openbare werken en nijverheid* jrg 28, 1913, no 28, 12-07-1913.

⁷⁴ “Een dure ongebruikte mesdjlt.”, *De locomotief : Samarangsche handels- en advertentie-blad*, Dag edition (Semarang, 13 Apr 1901), p. 2.

⁷⁵ “De Vrede in Atjeh”, p. 3.

was evident that the spatial practices (the act of rebuilding after it was burned down) of the Dutch were aimed at garnering the sympathy of the Acehese Muslims. The grand mosque (as a representational space) managed to be dominated and appropriated. It was mainly aimed at persuading the Acehese to accept or compromise with the arrival of Dutch colonialism. In 1879, the Dutch only managed to control the Aceh Besar regency.⁷⁶

Responding to the increasing Dutch hegemony, the Acehese Muslim fighters produced a counter space by referring to the concept of *hijra* (the migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina) and categorising Aceh Besar as *dar al-harb* (the abode of war). They encouraged the surviving Acehese fighters to leave Aceh Besar and go to the mountainous areas of Pidie, Gayo, and Pasai.⁷⁷ It was not surprising that the Acehese resistance then appeared everywhere because “the fire is not completely extinguished and there is no shortage of fuel; the enemy is defeated and leaves, but is not annihilated or brought to surrender; without suspicion and without fear, they lay hiding in our borders, but beyond our reach.”⁷⁸

The mountainous areas had a landscape that was not easily accessible to the Dutch troops. In these areas, the Acehese fighters formed and mobilised their resistance forces to block the expansion of the Dutch territory. Among the previous meeting places (such as in Lamsie and Biram Lamtamot mountains) for rallying the unity of the Acehese fighters, the meeting held at Tiro, an area of Pidie, finally succeeded in holding an agreement. Tiro’s election as a meeting place was not without reason. Tiro represented a centre of Islamic education in Aceh. Tiro was a famous destination for many students from various regions of Aceh to gain religious knowledge from Tiro *ulama*. At the same time, Tiro was indeed a centre of charismatic *ulama*. In general, the Acehese *ulama* were actors who were reluctant to compromise with the Dutch, as if they were compared to the *uleebalang* with whom many of them had signed *korte verklaring* (a friendly agreement with the

⁷⁶ Amirul Hadi, “Exploring Acehese Understanding of Jihad: A Study of the Hikayat Prang Sabi”, in *Mapping the Acehese Past*, ed. by R. Michael Feener (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), p. 194.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*; Jakub, *Tengku Tjibik Di Tiro*, pp. 32–8; Ibrahim Alfian and Zakaria Ahmad, *Sejarah Perlawanan terhadap Kolonialisme dan Imperialisme di Daerah Aceh* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1982), p. 51.

⁷⁸ Nederburgh, *Proeve van een onderzoek*, p. 15.

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies Dutch).⁷⁹ Thus, the selection of Tiro provided a moment for producing a powerful counter space.

The meeting in Tiro resulted in the appointment of Tengku Sheykh Hadji Saman (later known as Tengku Thjik Di Tiro) as the leader of the Acehese resistance. Despite the religiously Islamic cause (i.e., a holy war against the Dutch infidels), a *spatio*-regional awareness motivated the resistance of the Tiro *ulamas*. That is, if the Dutch controlled Aceh Besar, Pidie would also be facing the threat of continuing Dutch penetration. After being defeated in Aceh Besar, Tengku Di Tiro then succeeded in reviving and mobilising the resistance movement of the Acehese Muslims from 1881 to 1891.⁸⁰ The leadership of Tiro's *ulama* played a central role in this era, as it emanated from the figurative body of Tengku Di Tiro. A number of *ulama* exerted fatwas to counter the continuing influence of Tengku Di Tiro. Sayyid Uthman, for example, issued a fatwa stating that “the Acehese should stop fighting against the Dutch because of the great damage that would be done to Islam and Muslims if they continued the war.”⁸¹ In general, the appropriated (moderate) *ulama* demanded the Acehese surrender (*taslim*) because the Dutch never prohibited Muslims from practising worship, rituals, and rites.⁸² Such moderate narrative-making was hard to outweigh the figurative body of Tengku Di Tiro. Only after the death of Tengku Di Tiro and his descendants did the Aceh resistance movements die down, along with the establishment of a civilian government in 1910.⁸³

For propaganda, Tengku Di Tiro extensively made use of the religious spaces of the Acehese Muslims. *Dayah* (centres for Islamic education) and *Meunasah* (places for social-religious gatherings in villages) were extensively appropriated for the success of holy war propaganda. *Dayah* and *Meunasah*, as the Acehese Muslim spaces, were of symbolic-religious power, and, therefore, the use of such religious spaces as channels for propaganda succeeded in recruiting many followers. In just three months, Tengku Di Tiro managed to recruit five

⁷⁹ Jakub, *Tengku Tjbiik Di Tiro*, pp. 40–2.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 46–8; Hadi, “Exploring Acehese Understanding of Jihad”, p. 189.

⁸¹ P. S. V. Koningsveld, “Conversion of European Intellectuals to Islam”, p. 99.

⁸² Zentgraaff, *Aceh*, pp. 395–6; Hadi, “Exploring Acehese Understanding of Jihad”, pp. 194–5.

⁸³ Zentgraaff, *Aceh*; E.E. Morris, “Islam and Politics in Aceh: A Study of Center-Periphery Relations in Indonesia” (Michigan: Cornell University, 1983); Alfian, *Perang di Jalan Allah*.

hundred followers.⁸⁴ At the same time, Tengku Di Tiro rebuilt mosques and Islamic learning centres in seized villages that the Dutch burned down.⁸⁵ The Dutch had repeated their mistakes by always burning the religious spaces in the conquered territories. The burning of such religious spaces made the Acehnese furious, intensifying their resistance by gravely reclaiming the conquered territories. For that reason, when Van Heutsz was appointed governor of Aceh in 1898, he issued a ban on burning villages, mosques, and houses under any circumstances. The Dutch carried out such spatial practice with intentional awareness because it was based on a suggestion from Snouck Hurgronje, the Dutch chief advisor on Aceh affairs.⁸⁶

The Dutch or anti-Dutch spatial practices in the Aceh War show that social space is a social product. The act of (forbidding) burning and rebuilding mosques as spatial practices was not merely instrumental since it was socially or politically operational in moderating resistance to Dutch colonial dominance or inflaming anti-Dutch movements. The Dutch spatial practices seemed realistic at first glance, obscuring the interests of the dominant structures of Dutch colonialism. Thus, the religious space in the Aceh War was not a void; instead, there were social and political aspects hidden or concealed behind its reproduction.

2. *The Dutch Appropriation of Moderate Muslim Figures and Narrative during the Sarekat Islam Era*

The reproduction of Muslim space, such as a mosque, to benefit the hegemony of Dutch colonialism was discovered in Central Java on 17 February 1926. An API magazine reporter gave an ironic tone about the donation of a mosque to Banglarangan village in Pekalongan by the administrator of the Dutch sugar factory in Comal, a Dutchman named Mr. Blank. The irony was that the building of the mosque was only a weapon to grab rice fields from local villagers, and the result was that they had a mosque but were forced to eat “*trompos*,” which was actually pig food.⁸⁷

Throughout the ethical era (1901-1942), the Dutch continued

⁸⁴ Jakub, *Tengku Tjibik Di Tiro*, p. 75.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 93.

⁸⁶ Van Veer, *Perang Aceh*, pp. 195–7.

⁸⁷ *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisisch-Chineesche pers, 1926, no 9, 26-02-1926*, no. 9 (Drukkerij Volkslectuur, Weltevreden, 1926), p. 433.

to reproduce socio-religious space for colonial hegemony.⁸⁸ Ethical politics was a new Dutch policy in 1901 that provided opportunities (or temporal fixes) for indigenous people to improve their welfare by increasing access to education, irrigation, and emigration. Dutch colonial policy saw a dramatic transformation at the beginning of the 20th Century, moving from the exploitation of Indonesia to an emphasis on the welfare of Indonesians. The ‘Ethical policy’ era was shaped by both financial gains and humanitarian considerations. The anti-Dutch book Max Havelaar galvanised sympathy for relief efforts for Java’s oppressed peoples. Private capitalism shaped colonial politics during the ‘liberal’ era (1870–1900), as Dutch businesses recognised Indonesia as a viable market and pursued investment possibilities. Due to the demand for the Indonesian workforce in contemporary businesses, the Ethical policy was developed.⁸⁹ But since the Ethical policy was nothing more than a new paradigm of colonial exploitation—“more promise than performance”—it was actually not grounded in humanitarian concern.⁹⁰ In this regard, the Ethical policy served as Dutch abstract space, which is contradictory and deceptive in nature.

During the ethical era, native organisational representations seemingly emerged as a means for prosperity in the Dutch East Indies.⁹¹ *Sarekat Islam* (SI), an early modern native organisation established in 1911, initially protected Surakarta Batik merchants from Chinese competitors⁹² but later focused on gathering Muslims for progress under the leadership of Tjokroaminoto,⁹³ requiring members to practice Islamic sharia.⁹⁴

Initially seen as a revolutionary movement, SI gathered Muslims’ potential power to fight for their rights under the colonial government. In 1916, Dutch journalist W.K.S. van Haastert, a senior Dutch journalist,

⁸⁸ Interestingly, Hurgronje, the one who suggested a violently harsh approach in the Aceh war, became the one of those who suggested the ethical policy, see van Veer, *Perang Aceh*, pp. 230-2. It is, therefore, I think that a strategy applied in the ethical era was a continuation of the Aceh war.

⁸⁹ M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 193-4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁹¹ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 206.

⁹² McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, p. 78.

⁹³ Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, p. 57.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

warned the colonial government to disband SI.⁹⁵ However, SI, led by Tjokroaminoto, preferred Dutch ethical politics⁹⁶ and was considered an anti-revolutionary movement, defying revolutionary symptoms as it “did not oppose the oppressors of the Muslims but instead made a tool to deter the revolutionary actions” led by the radical faction within SI.⁹⁷ In this regard, the body of Tjokroaminoto served as an intermediary representing Dutch colonial objectives in the social space of the Dutch ethical era.

SI under Tjokroaminoto cooperated with the colonial government to promote the welfare of *bumiputra*, indigenous people. They allowed them to carry out activities without violating the Indies government’s peace and order (*Rust en Orde*). This ethical policy aimed to provide previously unavailable access, moderate anti-Dutch resistance, and channel the radical insistences of *bumiputra* into a modern organisational space. In 1912, for example, SI activities were temporarily suspended due to concerns about ruining *Rust en Orde*. The boycott against Chinese firms and forced labour led to a raid on the Surakarta SI office and central administrators. Calming down SI members, the boards used *Ramadan*, a month symbolising peace, to promote anti-evil and anti-damage, allowing them to deradicalise and preserve *Rust en Orde*.⁹⁸

Tjokroaminoto played a crucial role in the appropriation of SI, making it operate within the boundaries of Dutch ethical politics. Tjokroaminoto was a charismatic figure known for his belligerent attitude.⁹⁹ Ricklefs doubted his “profound knowledge of Islam”¹⁰⁰ as a descendant of a prominent *ulama* of East Java (Kyai Hasan Besari),¹⁰¹ and he was criticised for his intimate relationship with Dr. Rinkes, the Dutch Deputy Advisor for Native Affairs, who helped dominate SI and defuse it for the colonial government’s benefit.¹⁰²

As a matter of fact, SI under Tjokroaminoto proclaimed “loyalty

⁹⁵ Haastert, *De Sarikat Islam*, p. 12.

⁹⁶ Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, p. 61.

⁹⁷ *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisisch-Chineesche pers, 1926, no 9, 26-02-1926*, pp. 430-1.

⁹⁸ Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, pp. 62–4.

⁹⁹ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 210.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Amelz, *HOS Tjokroaminoto: Hidup dan Perjuangannya* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1952), vol. I, p. 50.

¹⁰² Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, p. 113.

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies to the Dutch regime”¹⁰³ and to convince Muslims towards such a moderate choice, for example, Tjokroaminoto asserted in his speech that “according to the *sjarak* (religious law) of Islam, we have to obey the laws of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.”¹⁰⁴ Through the figurative body of Tjokroaminoto, the reproduction of moderating Islamic narrative had become a manifest way to preserve colonial hegemony. Such a religiously moderate position evidently represented the repercussions of colonial hegemony in social space. The appropriation of Muslim leaders, or *ulama*, seems to be a dominant strategy to perpetuate the Dutch colonial hegemony in the social space of the ethical era. Through them, the narrative of moderation towards Dutch colonialism was reproduced.

In addition to Tjokroaminoto, Sayyid Uthman was another Muslim figure who provided moderate Islamic arguments to endorse Dutch colonialism. Uthman was credited with supplying religious arguments for weakening the *tarekat* (Muslim ascetics) movements.¹⁰⁵ He collaborated with Snouck Hurgronje, from whom he obtained credit for being moderate, realistic, and loyal to the Dutch.¹⁰⁶ He produced a number of Islamic legal arguments for publicly endorsing Dutch colonisation. He once issued a fatwa acknowledging Dutch colonial validity by citing the Quran, prophetic tradition, and Islamic legal theorem. For example, to call for obedience to the Dutch colonial government as the right way for Muslims could perform their religious duties, he cited Quran 41:33 (and who is better in speech than he who calls [for obedience] to God and does right), a prophetic saying “*man asda ilaykum ma'rūfan fa-kāfi'ūb*” (whosoever confers a benefit upon you, should be repaid by you), and a fiqh theorem “*mā lā yatim al-wājib illā bib fa-huwa wājib*” (something that was compulsory could only be undertaken by performing another matter, then this other matter was also compulsory).¹⁰⁷ His services led

¹⁰³ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 211.

¹⁰⁴ Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁵ Nico J.G. Kaptein, “Arabophobia and Tarekat: How Sayyid Uthman Became Advisor to the Netherlands Colonial Administration”, in *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?*, ed. by Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk and Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009).

¹⁰⁶ D.H. van Gelder (ed.), *Het regt in Nederlandsch-Indië; regtskundig tijdschrift, 1894, Deel: Drie-en-Zestigste Deel, 01-01-1894* (Batavia: Lange & co., 1894), pp. 723-4, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMUBL.08:002800001:00001>, accessed 28 Feb 2020.

¹⁰⁷ N.J.G. Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherlands East Indies: a Biography of Sayyid Uthman (1822-1914)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 243-5.

to his knighthood¹⁰⁸ and a portrait displayed on Queen Wilhelmina's 40th anniversary, along with JT Cremer, GG Van Heutsz, Snouck Hurgronje, Kartini, and Tjong A. Fie as meritorious figures for colonial rule.¹⁰⁹

In March 1913, Tjokroaminoto invited Sayyid Uthman, an Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs of the Dutch, to deliver a speech at the SI Congress in Solo.¹¹⁰ Uthman emphasised that Islam is a religion of goodness, and SI should behave well towards Dutch colonials, as the Dutch colonial government treated Muslims well. He emphasised the importance of freedom to worship God and that opposing Dutch means to treat poorly those who have treated Muslims in a good manner.¹¹¹ Uthman's speech promoted a moderate position towards Dutch colonialism, which was confirmed through his Islamic legal arguments. Such production of Islamic narrative mediated the transformation of Dutch abstract space into religious absolute space, making it hard to oppose it since it had dogmatic power for Muslims. It primarily aimed at compelling SI members to comply with Dutch policies (e.g., *Rust en Orde*) and avoid radical resistance against the Dutch colonial government.

Sayyid Uthman's weak voice and rowdy audience led to a re-reading of the speech by Hasan Soerati. The congress at Solo City Park attracted around 30,000 people, with speeches expressing pro-Dutch sentiments, homage to the Dutch Royal Family, and promises of faith and loyalty to the Queen. The goal of the organisation was to elevate the Javanese economy without opposition or riot.¹¹² Sayyid Uthman's speech successfully appropriated the atmosphere of the SI Congress, showcasing the Muslim pro-Dutch organisation.¹¹³ The Dutch managed to dominate SI as a representational space of a Muslim organisation, appropriating it with a narrative of moderate Islam and symbolising it as the Muslim pro-Dutch's *Rust en Orde* policy.

Sayyid Uthman's speech above was printed to be able to distribute

¹⁰⁸ Herman Theodorus Obbink, *De heilige oorlog volgens den Koran* (Brill, 1901), p. 9.

¹⁰⁹ D. Kouwenaar, *Amsterdam tijdens het feestbetoon bij het 40-jarige regeringsjubileum van H. M. Koningin Wilhelmina van 5 tot 12 september 1938* (De Bussy, 1939), pp. 246-7.

¹¹⁰ Kaptein, N.J.G., "Grateful to the Dutch Government: Sayyid 'Uthman and Sarekat Islam in 1913", in *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, ed. by Anthony Reid and Michael Gilson (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 102.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2-3; Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age*, pp. 238-9.

¹¹² *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, p. 3.

¹¹³ Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age*, p. 239.

The Reproduction of Muslim Religious Space in the Dutch East Indies in a wider social space. Sayyid Uthman's written materials significantly influenced public opinion in Java and beyond.¹¹⁴ He produced a moderate Islamic narrative, which was printed into posters and distributed to mosques. This helped moderate radical insistences among Muslims and secure Dutch colonial hegemony.¹¹⁵ As a result, Sayyid Uthman claimed that more people performed *ṣalat*, mosques were full, religion was studied, shops opened, and theft and robbery decreased.¹¹⁶

The moderated socio-religious space of SI is pervasively expanding and appropriating other religious spaces. For example, a few religious leaders stopped at *Wali Songo's* graves before heading to *Sarekat Islam* meetings to offer prayers for the group and everyone involved,¹¹⁷ which was likely intended to confirm SI's moderate stance towards Dutch colonialism as "the nine saints are presented as propagators of the faith who simultaneously behaved with tact and moderation, accepting existing culture wherever possible."¹¹⁸

Tjokroaminoto's moderate stance is not without criticism. A number of anti-Dutch activists responded fiercely against Tjokroaminoto's moderating efforts. For example, Semaoen, a member of *Sarekat Islam* of Semarang,¹¹⁹ criticised Tjokroaminoto's logic of moderation towards the Dutch ethical policy (particularly the *Rust en Orde*) by arguing that *bumiputra* should not expect to move in a "peaceful" way because the movement itself stemmed from the disrupted orderliness brought by colonialism's exploitative structure. Semaoen clearly believed that "movement would lead to the progress of *bumiputra*, while order would lead to stagnation."¹²⁰ Semaoen considered the narrative discourse of *Rust en Orde* deceptive.

Hadji Misbach, a pesantren-graduated Muslim preacher,¹²¹ attacked Tjokroaminoto for using Islam for his own benefit. The fact that Tjokroaminoto was allegedly known for his corrupt practices in managing the SI funds provided grounds to delegitimise his moderate

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 246; Kaptein, "Grateful to the Dutch Government", p. 109.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

¹¹⁷ Kees van Dijk, "Dakwah and Indigenous Culture; The Dissemination of Islam", *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, vol. 154, no. 2 (1998), pp. 218–35.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹¹⁹ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 219.

¹²⁰ Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, p. 139.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108; Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 222.

position religiously. Misbach labelled Tjokroaminoto as a devil (*setan*) who ruined SI by referring to the Quranic story of Adam, who was deceived by a devil.¹²² Misbach deemed Tjokroaminoto's moderate position as non-Islamic and portrayed him as an Islamic fighter who betrayed Islamic teachings. Misbach argued that Tjokroaminoto should have sacrificed himself and his possessions instead of fighting under Dutch protection and corrupting Muslims' funds.¹²³

Misbach delegitimised Tjokroaminoto's religiously-based moderation propaganda by promoting a counter-narrative and space. Misbach propagated *sabilillahisme*, an Islamic doctrine advocating Muslims to be ready to die as martyrs in defence of Islam, from which counter-narrative and actions against Dutch colonialism were produced.¹²⁴ Misbach published a writing in *Medan Moeslimin* entitled "Sroean Kita" (Our Exclamation) that cited a verse of the Quran (49:15) to emphasise the importance of actions because "whoever his act betrayed his words means a fake Muslim." The "fake Islam" or "rhetoric Islam" (*Islam lamisan*) was "the educated people of Islam who say good things or be merciful just to save their own name." Therefore, "Whoever robs the religion of Islam, him are we obliged to destroy."¹²⁵ Such a pejorative moniker for Tjokroaminoto continued to grow. For example, in *Sinar Hindia* on 14/18/20 August 1923, Tjokroaminoto was called a traitor, fake foreman, imposter, tapeworm, hyena, and termite who spoiled SI.¹²⁶

For propaganda, in addition to writing in newspapers, Misbach occupied social space in public meetings. Misbach attended many social meetings and spoke directly to the people. Misbach's radical speeches triggered peasant strikes and resistances in Surakarta. Finally, as a result of such radicalising efforts, Misbach was arrested on 20 October 1923 and exiled to Manokwari until he died of malaria on 24 May 1926.¹²⁷ To

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 365.

¹²³ In May 1920, for example, the deposits of SI fund were empty, therefore Tjokroaminoto lent his personal money of 2000 guilders, but strangely the guarantee was the SI car, which was bought for 2800 guilders, for his operational activities. Not only that, Tjokroaminoto was attacked for his huge expenses as SI chairman which reached 3000 guilders, it was turned out that one of which was spent to buy jewellery for his second wife; *ibid.*, pp. 298, 309.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 181–6.

¹²⁶ *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisisch-Chineesche pers, 1923, no 34, 19-02-1923*, no. 34 (Drukkerij Volkslectuur, Weltevreden, 1923), pp. 356-9.

¹²⁷ Shiraishi, *Zaman Bergerak*, pp. 202-4, 384.

perpetuate Misbach's teachings in social space, a number of Muslim propagandists established a Muslim movement called *Moeallimin*, which means "religious teachers," who met regularly to study the Quran and Hadith, translating them into Javanese and interpreting their meanings in the context of anti-Dutch colonialism with Marxist undertones. On 20 February 1926, it was reported that hundreds of people attended every Islamic lecture and sermon of *Moeallimin's* propagandists.¹²⁸ *Moe'alimin* successfully recruited large numbers of followers since the Dutch did not initially monitor it. *Moe'alimin's* activities became more massive in many places, and the Dutch government began monitoring them closely. Only the purely Quran and Hadith discussions were allowed. The excessive fear of the Dutch police led the police to supervise every activity of *Moe'alimin*. Every night, many police went to *langgar* (small mosques), mosques, and Muslim education centres. Numerous religious spaces were transformed into counter spaces. To make matters worse, every Muslim prayer and *darusan* (reciting the Quran in mosques) was conducted under the supervision of the Dutch police. By the end of January 1926, the police were overwhelmed with watching over *Moe'alimin's* activities almost daily.¹²⁹

The Dutch government's fear peaked in the capture of three prominent propagandists of *Moe'alimin*, i.e., Oesmani, Atmoesoemarto, and Rochani, at the end of February 1926. This arrest led to a large demonstration attended by 10,000 people. The demonstration was held after a Friday prayer at the Kauman Great Mosque. The mosque was symbolically appropriated to boost Muslim support. The selection of the Kauman Great Mosque played an operational role in raising protest participation. The number of Friday prayers suddenly tripled, and even people who usually did not come to pray also attended the Friday prayer. The sympathisers did not only come from the members of *Moe'alimin*, but many other Muslims joined in the protest because the Dutch government's actions were perceived as having excessively intervened in religious activity. The demonstration was performed with a rally by chanting (*dbiker*) "*Lailabhailalob Moehammad Roeselloellab*". The Indies police forcibly dismissed this demonstration with repression and caused a small war. After this demonstration, the Dutch government recognised the danger of *Moe'alimin* and subsequently destroyed it by

¹²⁸ *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisisch-Chineesche pers, 1926, no 9, 26-02-1926*, pp. 437-8.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 443-4, 453-4.

capturing its propagandists. The destruction of *Moe'alimin* marked the collapse of a productive religious movement in radicalising people against Dutch colonialism in Surakarta.¹³⁰ In the end, such a fascist, repressive, and violent approach showed that the abstract space of Dutch colonialism had transformed into political absolute space.

D. Concluding Remarks

The root of moderate Islam in Dutch colonial rule shows that it instrumentally served to retain Dutch colonial power. Through the reproduction of religious space, moderate Islam was politicised to secure colonial power by occupying or appropriating religious buildings, figures, and narratives. Moderate Islam was demonised because it contributed to the perpetuation of the exploitative nature of colonialism. The Dutch played a significant role in the reproduction of religious space, leading to the development of moderate Islam. The reproduction of moderate Islam benefited the continuation of Dutch colonialism in the East Indies. The dogmatic dimension and power of religious (absolute) space attracted the Dutch to reproduce it to conceal the inherent contradictions of colonialism and ethical politics in the social space of the East Indies. The inherent contradictions of the Dutch spatial and social practices led to a moment for counter spaces to emerge, condemn, and reverse the dominating efforts of colonialism in social space. Nevertheless, the Dutch ultimately wiped them out to maintain their colonial hegemony in the East Indies.

From the reproduction of moderate Islam in the social space of the Dutch colonial periods, a number of substantial points are worthy of underline. Religious space has constantly been an object of interest to be dominated, appropriated, and reproduced to conceal the hidden interests of the dominant structure. Such a spatial reproduction has continued to target religious buildings, figures, and narratives. Religious space is dominated, appropriated, and reproduced in such a way that it is compatible with the interests of the status quo. A moderate Islam is the end product that the dominant structure wishes to produce in social space. Indeed, in the contemporary development of Indonesia, moderate Islam has a close relationship with the ruling government, as indicated by Muhtadi & Mietzner and Kato, in which moderate Islam is shown to be a tool for serving the interests of the governing party. It

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 455-6.

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is worth noting that if, in recent developments, moderate Islam is seen as a good character, in the Dutch colonial periods, moderate Islam was a despicable character. Radical Islam, on the other hand, is a character that was praised in the colonial era because it was a counter-space that opposed the perpetuation of exploitative structures and *vice versa* in the recent context of Indonesia. Thus, it is now crucial to pose questions in contemporary Indonesia: is moderate Islam still serving the exploitative structures of the dominant group? Is radical Islam still opposing them? Or, are there any traces and remnants left over from the Dutch colonial period's reproduction of religious space?

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